new light which we beg for ſhines in upon us, there be who envy, and oppoſe, if it come not firſt in at their caſements. What a colluſion is this, whenas we are exhorted by the wiſe man to uſe diligence, *to ſeek for wiſdom as for hidd'n treaſures* early and late, that another order ſhall enjoyn us to know nothing but by ſtatute. When a man hath bin labouring the hardeſt labour in the deep mines of knowledge, hath furniſht out his findings in all their equipage, drawn forth his reaſons as it were a battell raung'd, ſcatter'd and defeated all objections in his way, calls out his adverſary into the plain, offers him the advantage of wind and ſun, if he pleaſe; only that he may try the matter by dint of argument, for his opponents then to ſculk, to lay ambuſhments, to keep a narrow bridge of licencing where the challenger ſhould paſſe, though it be valour anough in ſhouldierſhip, is but weaknes and cowardiſe in the wars of Truth. For who knows not that Truth is ſtrong next to the Almighty; ſhe needs no policies, nor ſtratagems, nor licencings to make her victorious, thoſe are the ſhifts and the defences that error uſes againſt her power: give her but room, & do not bind her when ſhe ſleeps, for then ſhe ſpeaks not true, as the old *Proteus* did, who ſpake oracles only when he was caught & bound, but then rather ſhe turns herſelf into all ſhapes, except her own, and perhaps tunes her voice according to the time, as *Micaiah* did before *Ahab*, untill ſhe be adjur'd into her own likenes. Yet is it not impoſſible that ſhe may have more ſhapes then one. What elſe is all that rank of things indifferent, wherein Truth may be on this ſide, or on the other, without being unlike her ſelf. What but a vain ſhadow elſe is the abolition of *thoſe ordinances, that hand writing nayl'd to the croſſe*, what great purchaſe is this Chriſtian liberty which *Paul* ſo often boaſts of. His doctrine is, that he who eats or eats not, regards a day, or regards it not, may doe either to the Lord. How many other things might be tolerated in peace, and left to conſcience, had we but charity, and were it not the chief ſtrong hold of our hypocriſie to be ever judging one another. I fear yet this iron yoke of outward conformity hath left a ſlaviſh print upon our necks; the ghoſt of a linnen decency yet haunts us. We ſtumble and are impatient at the leaſt dividing of one viſible congregation from another, though it be not in fundamentalls; and through our forwardnes to ſuppreſſe, and our backwardnes to recover any en-

enthrall'd peece of truth out of the gripe of cuſtom, we care not to keep truth ſeparated from truth, which is the fierceſt rent and diſunion of all. We doe not ſee that while we ſtill affect by all means a rigid externall formality, we may as ſoon fall again into a groſſe conforming ſtupidity, a ſtark and dead congealment of *wood and hay and ſtubble* forc't and frozen together, which is more to the ſudden degenerating of a Church then many *ſubdichotomies* of petty ſchiſms. Not that I can think well of every light ſeparation, or that all in a Church is to be expected *gold and ſilver and pretious ſtones*: it is not poſſible for man to ſever the wheat from the tares, the good fiſh from the other frie; that muſt be the Angels Miniſtery at the end of mortall things. Yet if all cannot be of one mind, as who looks they ſhould be? this doubtles is more wholſome, more prudent, and more Chriſtian that many be tolerated, rather then all compell'd. I mean not tolerated Popery, and open ſuperſtition, which as it extirpats all religions and civill ſupremacies, ſo it ſelf ſhould be extirpat, provided firſt that all charitable and compaſſionat means be us'd to win and regain the weak and the miſled: that alſo which is impious or evil abſolutely either againſt faith or maners no law can poſſibly permit, that intends not to unlaw it ſelf: but thoſe neighboring differences, or rather indifferences, are what I ſpeak of, whether in ſome point of doctrine or of diſcipline, which though they may be many, yet need not interrupt *the unity of Spirit*, if we could but find among us *the bond of peace*. In the mean while if any one would write, and bring his helpfull hand to the ſlow-moving Reformation which we labour under, if Truth have ſpok'n to him before others, or but ſeem'd at leaſt to ſpeak, who hath ſo bejeſuited us that we ſhould trouble that man with asking licence to doe ſo worthy a deed? and not conſider this, that if it come to prohibiting, there is not ought more likely to be prohibited then truth it ſelf; whoſe firſt appearance to our eyes bleer'd and dimm'd with prejudice and cuſtom, is more unſightly and unplauſible then many errors, ev'n as the perſon is of many a great man ſlight and contemptible to ſee to. And what doe they tell us vainly of new opinions, when this very opinion of theirs, that none muſt be heard, but whom they like, is the worſt and neweſt opinion of all others; and is the chief cauſe why ſects and ſchiſms doe ſo much abound, and true knowledge is kept at diſtance from us; beſides yet a greater danger

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